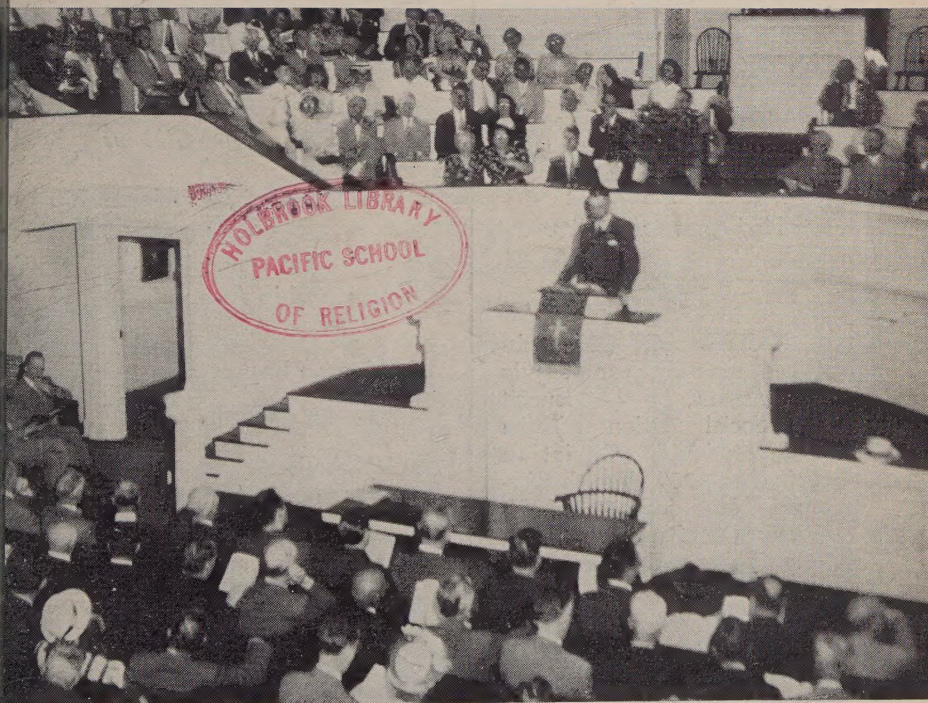


SOCIAL ACTION

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SEPTEMBER 15, 1948



A New Kind of Churchmanship

By Liston Pope

SOCIAL ACTION

With WASHINGTON REPORT

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CONTENTS

Contemporary Social Pioneers

Ray Gibbons 3

A New Kind of Churchmanship

Liston Pope 5

Churchmanship Awards 17

Washington Report

Thomas B. Keehn 24

On To Action

Ray Gibbons back cover

COVER: A session at the Oberlin General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, June, 1948. Photograph by Walton Moffitt for the Department of Visual Aids.

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Contemporary Social Pioneers

This first issue of the newly combined *Social Action-Washington Report* is a response to several insistent reader demands. One such came from a woman who was indignant at the impression conveyed by the pictures of the five "old men" on the cover of the June issue of *Social Action*. "Even if they were 'Congregational Social Pioneers' in their day the general impression is that pioneering is a thing of the past," she protested. "Give us contemporary explorers! Tell us who's leading the procession, today! Is social action simply a heritage or is it a living force, a current event and the hope of the future?" So, in this issue, we give the four brief citations for Social Action Churchmanship Awards which were made by the Council for Social Action at the Oberlin meetings of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, June 18, 1948. The recipients are among the contemporary social pioneers who are blazing the trails for advancing civilization with the same intrepid courage as that of Samuel Worcester, Joshua Leavitt, Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong and Graham Taylor.

Another demand came from the many persons who heard the Editor of *Social Action*, Professor Liston Pope, deliver the address at the Oberlin General Council celebrating the founding, in that same place just fourteen years previously, of the Council for Social Action. Not one or a dozen but scores of hearers requested that the address be printed and widely distributed. They were convinced it threw new light upon emerging social issues, quickened a new awareness of the social mis-

sion of the Christian Church, and awakened slumbering ethical resources for the social struggle ahead. As one declared, "In this day of growing conservatism, when the social gains of a decade are seriously imperilled, it is important that the trumpet give no uncertain sound but summon us to prepare for battle." Because we believe that this address sounds such a clarion call, rising above the bounds of denominational and commemorative interest to summon clergymen and churchmen of all fellowships to a new conquest of the kingdoms of the world for God and Christ, we print this speech of Professor Pope at the earliest opportunity.

Already well known to readers as the Editor of *Social Action* and to theological students as the Gilbert L. Stark Professor of Social Ethics at Yale University Divinity School, Liston Pope is rapidly becoming known to liberal churchmen as one of the able leaders in the forefront of contemporary "social pioneers."

—RAY GIBBONS

A New Kind Of Churchmanship

By Liston Pope

In one of the buildings at Oberlin College is a memorial tablet commemorating one of Congregationalism's greatest men. The inscription on the bronze plaque at the entrance to Bosworth Hall reads as follows:

REV. CHARLES G. FINNEY

1792-1875

One of the World's Great Evangelists

1822 to 1835

Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology

1835 to 1875

Second President of Oberlin College

1851 to 1867

Pastor of the First Congregational Church

1836 to 1873

They that turn many to righteousness
Shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

This inscription is remarkable not only for the greatness which it celebrates, but also for the number of errors it contains. According to a recent study of him by Roy Cheesebro,* Finney began his evangelistic activity in 1824, not in 1822. He ended it when he died in 1875, not in 1835 when he began to teach at Oberlin; to become a professor of theology does not necessarily involve desertion from the Christian evangel. Nor was Finney professor of theology at Oberlin for the period specified; his work in that post ended in 1858 instead of 1875.

*This study is an unpublished doctoral dissertation at Yale University. Many of the illustrations that follow are drawn from Dr. Cheesebro's manuscript.

The plaque is correct in stating that he was the second president of Oberlin College, but again the dates are wrong: he was president until 1865, not 1867. And he was pastor of the First Congregational Church from 1837 to 1872, not from 1836 to 1873. The Scripture quotation at the end of the inscription is substantially correct, and it applies to Finney: "They that turn many to righteousness [shall shine] as the stars for ever and ever." But this particular tablet does not shine with constancy, unless in the consistency with which it misrepresents the great career it professes to celebrate.

A Shining Tradition

As we serve our denomination in our various workaday roles through these years, we are etching a plaque to magnify, or to distort, a shining tradition. Our religious movement in this nation began with the Pilgrim's passion for freedom and with the Puritan conscience that refused to forsake its faith. Congregationalists helped to conquer the great spaces of a new continent: first the wilderness of western Massachusetts and Connecticut, and then on to the Western Reserve, and across the great plains to the mountains and the sea. Wherever it went, Congregationalism carried democratic institutions, and its basic teachings lie near the heart of this Republic. Whenever its own life became stagnant, great revivals of religion restored its crusading power. It flung a network of schools and mission stations and institutions of mercy across the land. It raised up leaders to crusade for peace and for the abolition of slavery and for racial and economic justice—Samuel Worcester, Henry Ward Beecher, Joshua Leavitt, Jesse Henry Jones, Joseph Cook, Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, Graham Taylor, Arthur Holt—their names are legion and, having turned many to righteousness, they shine like the stars. We are children of a pioneering and prophetic radicalism, and except as we carry it on we betray both our own heritage and the visions our forebears have taught to America.

Our Congregational tradition contains explicit injunctions to

look beyond ourselves to the problems of the world, rather than to seek merely to improve or increase our own fellowship. One of the founders of Oberlin College, John Jay Shipherd, had as his purpose to Christianize the frontier and "educate school teachers for our desolate valley, and many ministers for our dying world." Charles G. Finney, though his central passion was for the conversion of individual sinners, taught that the converted man is not only reformed but also a reformer: Christians should set forth "with all their hearts," he said, "to search out all the evils in the world, and to reform the world, and drive out iniquity from the earth." "Religion is something to *do*," he insisted, "not something to wait for." Finney knew the desperate needs of his own time; he entreated the Christian church: "Ten thousand voices cry out from heaven, earth and hell, '*Do something to save the world!*' *Do it now*. Oh, *now*, or millions more are in hell through your neglect."

Issues a Century Ago

The issues confronting the world are far more fateful now than in Finney's day. Some of the terrors of his era still haunt us: war, involuntary servitude, financial speculation that looks suspiciously like gambling. Other issues that disturbed the middle of the nineteenth century appear quaint in retrospect. For example, a ladies' literary society at Oberlin in 1862 held a debate on the proposition: "Resolved that Pres. Lincoln is not so bad a man as Pres. Finney thinks he is." History seems to have solved that question resoundingly in favor of Lincoln. For a great many years no student could be admitted to Oberlin who had travelled on the Sabbath in order to get there; now we are concerned over whether Americans even remember the Sabbath day, much less keep it holy. The ancient struggles over the use of tobacco have literally gone up in a cloud of smoke, and a question addressed by Finney to one of his audiences now causes more amusement than disquiet: "Perhaps some of you here tonight," he said, "have laid out God's money for

tobacco. . . . Think of a professor of religion, using God's money to poison himself with tobacco!"

Issues Today

There are still those who would restrict the social concern of the church to issues that agitated our forebears a hundred years ago. But the critical issues that confront America at this moment are of a different order. Consider first of all some of those that pertain most especially to our American scene.

1. There are certain pressing problems in the political realm. We shall be preoccupied for several months with the national election. The world will be watching us, much as it did in the election of 1920, and the implications of our decisions in November will reverberate throughout the world for many years.

If American voters behave in the forthcoming election as they have in the past, more than one-third will refrain from voting, and of those who do vote about ninety per cent will vote for the same party as in the past, regardless of current issues. There is something to be said from the politician's point of view both for political apathy and for party regularity, but there is not much to be said for either from the standpoint of the Christian conscience. Unless the Christian churches help to shape moral judgments on the men and policies of the forthcoming campaign, the outcome will depend simply on propaganda, party machines, and political maneuvering. To be sure, the Christian may have little real choice as between candidates and platforms, and many good churchmen will be tempted to boycott the polls with some remark about Tweedledum and Tweedledee. But the point of William James' statement was that there is always some difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and that though small the difference is highly important. It is a duty of the churches to help their members to discover this difference between the contestants, to examine it in the light of Christian conscience, and to act accordingly.

Congregational Politics

Congregational Christians have demonstrated no greater ability than other groups to vote as Christians rather than as property owners or as old families or in terms of some other secular standard. In 1944, 56 per cent of us voted for Mr. Dewey and 26 per cent of us for Mr. Roosevelt.* We led all other denominations in the size of our Republican plurality. It may be that, as Jesse Henry Jones said in 1872, "the Republican Party is the party of Jesus Christ"—but at least we might re-examine the question occasionally. If our reexamination confirms our obvious political preferences, we can then enjoy them the more virtuously.

Though their number appears to be diminishing, there are still persons who insist that the Christian Church has no business meddling with political issues in the first place. Interestingly enough, this viewpoint is being espoused most vigorously at the moment by the Communists, who are willing to tolerate the churches, in Russia, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere, so long as the churches refrain from judgments on the political sphere. This is one of those points—and there are several such—at which the extreme conservatives and the Communists find themselves to be comrades.

But the Christian Church cannot avoid the responsibility to make its testimony heard in the halls of the State, in election year and in every year. Except as this testimony is permitted, the State becomes totalitarian; except as it is heeded, the State becomes Machiavellian. It is little wonder that some of the most militant proponents of the absolute separation of church and state are found among the secularists and the atheists. That doctrine is not our Congregational heritage, and we trust it never shall be.

Economic Issues

2. On the economic front, all appears to be quiet and pros-

*Federal Council of Churches, *Information Service*, May 15, 1948.

perous in our country at the moment. The Christian cannot help being troubled, indeed, at our prosperity in contrast with the world's want. But even here at home some ominous and intolerable conditions prevail. In 1947, when the national income, corporation profits, industrial wages, and farm prosperity all reached new high levels, nearly one-third of our American families had incomes of less than \$2,000 for the year, according to the Federal Reserve Board. That figure is far too low, with prices where they are, to support a decent standard of living for a family of four in an urban center—and a majority of our population now lives in such centers. Here in rich America, desperate want remains all about us, if we have eyes to see. Fabulous wealth and bitter poverty inhabit the same town; immeasurable power is vested in a few corporations while the masses fear insecurity; the reins of actual government are passing again to the hands of private economic interests, and the processes of political democracy are being subverted. Organized labor, having just begun to come of age, has been severely chastised and sent back to the cellar to meditate on its sins, and the future of industrial relations is very unsettled. Down underneath in America a mighty resentment is growing—a resentment of unjust treatment and of the indifference of the powerful and the proud.

Prosperous Congregationalists

We Congregational Christians are not in a very good position to know about economic discontent. According to a recent study,* a larger percentage of us are business and professional people, and a smaller percentage of us belong to trade unions, than is true of any other major Protestant denomination. We draw a smaller percentage of our members from lower income groups. We are heirs of rough and poor pioneers, and their privations obviously were not in vain; they got there first, and we their descendants have been there ever since in terms of comparative privilege. By the same token, we may be compar-

*Federal Council of Churches, *loc. cit.*

actively divorced from the privations and fierce desires by which great masses still live.

We may be repeating the age-old mistake of fortunate heirs. An example is offered for our instruction in the fate of the Russian Revolution. In his book *Darkness at Noon*,* Arthur Koestler puts into the mouth of an old Bolshevik an interpretation of the early success of that revolution and of its subsequent betrayal. "At the time of the revolution," Rubashov says, "we were called the Party of the Plebs. What did the others know of history? Passing ripples, little eddies and breaking waves. They wondered at the changing forms of the surface and could not explain them. But we had descended into the depths, into the formless, anonymous masses, which at all times constituted the substance of history. . . . We dug in the primeval mud of history and there we found her laws. We knew more than ever men have known about mankind; that is why our revolution succeeded. And now you have buried it all again. . . ."

Unless our concern for social justice is deepened, we Congregational Christians may be among those who suffer the fate history has always reserved for the callous rich and the haughty proud. Except as our Christian conscience is quickened on matters of economic exploitation and misery, we can hardly claim to follow Him who exalted the poor and humble and Himself became the greatest of them.

Racial Issues

3. In no respect does American practice belie and betray American ideals more clearly than in race relations. Having just concluded a war against a self-appointed Master Race, we continue to act as though we white Protestants were by the favor of ancestry and of God a superior folk ourselves. For documentation of this assertion, it is necessary only to point to some of the recent studies of American racial practices, such as those

*Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*. Copyright, 1941 by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission.

by Myrdal and Loescher and particularly that of the President's Committee on Civil Rights.*

We Congregational Christians can assert that we are quantitatively more democratic and more Christian with respect to race than most of our sister denominations. Less than one per cent of the local Protestant congregations in the nation include persons from more than one racial group: according to a survey by Maynard Catchings for the American Missionary Association, six per cent of our Congregational Christian congregations have mixed membership. The mixture, when it does occur, is usually like the famous formula for French rabbit stew—one horse to one rabbit—with the minority group having only token representation. At the level of the state conventions, we also segregate our Negro brethren thoroughly in the Southern states. It is rather ironic that a denomination which gave so many leaders to the anti-slavery movement, and which supported so generously one of the greatest educational campaigns for Negroes ever undertaken, should have adapted itself so neatly in these latter days to a Jim Crow status quo. In the last few years we have begun to attack this system, but we have hardly begun to change it.

Issues in these realms—politics, economics, race relations—are only samples of the insistent questions with which America is now confronted and to which she must give answer, by courageous action or by default. Others might be discussed indefinitely: the revolution on the land and the struggles between farm groups; the battles for adequate health, education, and social security programs; the disintegration of American sex standards and of the family structure; the crisis in civil liberties which has developed in our anti-Communist program—and so on.

*Gunnar Myrdal. *An American Dilemma*. New York: Harper, 1944.

Frank S. Loescher. *The Protestant Church and the Negro*. New York: Association Press, 1948.

President's Committee on Civil Rights. *To Secure These Rights*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1947.

Problems in International Relations

4. There are likewise issues in international relations, of even graver consequence and vaster complexity. It is difficult to know in these days whether we are primarily in a postwar or a prewar situation. Many problems remain from the last war: peace treaties still unwritten, occupation policies still unsettled, atomic weapons still unbridled, the United Nations still disunited. Cities remain in ruins; displaced persons remain in concentration camps; four hundred million children remain in want. The Fascist dragon of World War II has been slain, but the dragon's teeth are sown around the world.

At the same time, we stand in a prewar situation. We may continue for several years to stand on the path, or the threshold, or the very edge of war; and by great patience and good fortune some other alternatives may at last emerge. But meanwhile there is fighting in Greece and China, and an uneasy peace prevails in Palestine, Korea, and Germany. Any of these might become a spark to set the world again on fire.

U.S. vs. U.S.S.R.

Most central of all, there is the problem of struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union—a struggle taking place at several levels simultaneously. Some would solve this problem simply by power, by military measures. Russia might be stopped thereby, but not Communism. Others would solve the problem simply by negotiation, forgetting that negotiation is often merely a mask for the underlying power struggle. Others would seek to evangelize the Communists, even though these new objects of missionary endeavor have long since had a thorough inoculation against religion, and a double dose for protection against what they regard as "American capitalist Christianity."

Perhaps the wisest, and most Christian, strategy is that of helping to build up a third bloc of nations in the world—a bloc that will be neither capitalist nor Communist, neither com-

pletely totalitarian nor wholly democratic, but representative of efforts to experiment with a middle way. Aid to the nations of Western Europe, and to China, fits into this strategy. After all, these nations have the strongest incentive to preserve the peace: a third World War would be fought on their territories, insofar as it was fought on land at all. There is little prospect at the moment that either the United States or Russia will break the circle of hostility toward each other; once again the hope of salvation from catastrophe may come from the comparatively weak and lowly of earth.

A New Kind of Churchmanship

Beset from behind and before by so many grievous issues, we easily agree with Livy that "we can no longer bear the ills we have, not yet the remedies for them." But we must perforce bear the ills, whether we would or no, and Christian faith is of such profound dimensions that we need not fear. Nor is it inconceivable that the churches, driven and sustained by so great a faith, can help to find remedies for a distraught world. A new kind of churchmanship must emerge before this consummation can be achieved. Rather, an old kind of churchmanship must be made new again among us.

Christian Imperatives

The most important prerequisite for this churchmanship is that we shall come again to hear the ringing imperatives of the Christian gospel, and to know on whom we have believed. The church in America has taken on the protective coloration of the society in which it lives, and therefore blends easily with the social landscape and accommodates neatly to the evil all about it. For many churchmen God and country are twin members of the deity. Some of us have a veritable pantheon: class interests, racial prejudices, political loyalties, and international suspicions are all fused into an amalgam that we call the Christian faith. Like most religions, Christianity has tended to become a cultural religion rather than remaining a faith that transcends and redeems history.

Somewhere, as Matthew Arnold put it, we have mislaid our gospel. There is little hope for the church or the world unless the gospel is preached again in all its full-orbed implications, driving men to repentance of their sins individual and social, and sending redeemed men out to reform the church and the world. The church of Christ cannot meet the challenge of this hour with a middle-class ethic or an American creed; it can meet it only with the mind of Christ, and with the strange ethic of universal love and of relentless justice with which He redeemed sinners and destroyed wickedness.

A Mood for Retreat

On the other hand, the church cannot save itself or redeem the world by fastening its attention on itself and seeking to withdraw into its own concerns. Temptations to a new monasticism are very appealing in the midst of the prevailing chaos. Let us confess it: we churchmen are afraid of our world—afraid of statism and of anarchy, afraid of big business and of the Communists, afraid of the Roman Catholics and of the pagans. Our fear prevents us from taking the actions which might defeat what we fear. Everything makes us afraid; therefore we retreat to our own vine and fig tree, tending our ecclesiastical garden and dreaming of a magnificent harvest which will so impress men that they will stop fighting and come to sit down with us in Christian peace and concord.

Perhaps it is not fear that isolates us, but a comfortable status from which we do not wish to be disturbed. Or perhaps it is loss of vision or of touch with mankind. We often say that we must avoid controversial secular questions lest the fellowship of the church be broken. As a matter of fact, the church has already lost more members and more respect because it refused to stand up on issues of justice and right than it will lose if it does stand up. In any event, it is as true of a church as of an individual that "he who would save his life must lose it."

Insight Into Tragedy

A churchmanship that would save the church and redeem

the world must plumb the depths of the modern crisis, and know how apostate the church is and how lost the world is. The cult of optimism is no less regnant in American churches than in our Chambers of Commerce. We like to believe that we can reform the church by a little tinkering here or there—a new committee or a new special emphasis or another reorganization. We like to believe that we can reform the world by sprucing up our existing economic jungle and by revising a few racial patterns and by urging peace—by a little regulation here and a little liberation there.

All these may be necessary and important. But the sickness of the church and of society is too acute for therapy by braces and poultices. A churchmanship adequate for these times must be venturesome and radical, not in any secular sense but in the apostolic sense. Men who go forth from God need bow no knee save to Him Who sends them; because He is the Lord of history, their judgment on social institutions and practices can be searching and devastating rather than tentative and timorous. Under God every social system has its day and ceases to be, until His own will shall be done at last on earth as in heaven. Heralds of His kingdom are not simply apologists for some secular "ism" or mere mechanics tinkering with the church or with society. They are, in Emerson's words, "guides, redeemers, . . . obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark." They are craftsmen etching a true memorial to the noblest hopes of twenty centuries; and because in the economy of God no struggle for righteousness is ever lost, their work shall shine as the stars forever.

Churchmanship Awards

Four contemporary social pioneers were presented Churchmanship Awards by the Council for Social Action at its service for the Oberlin General Council meeting, June 18, 1948. Selected for their outstanding social action in public service, statesmanship, and race relations by the Council for Social Action, they were presented with citations written and read by the Reverend Alfred W. Swan, Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Madison, Wisconsin.

Miss Katharine Frederica Lenroot, Chief of the Children's Bureau, responded briefly with well-chosen remarks about the concern of the church for children.

"To make it possible for children and youth to develop the personal security, moral purpose, technical skill, insight and imagination necessary to enable them to function effectively as citizens in a world which must assure justice and freedom under law, if it is not to sink into oblivion or slavery," Miss Lenroot said, "is our most important task. All the discoveries in the world concerning atomic energy or supersonic flight will be meaningless if the men and women who will have at their disposal the hitherto undreamed of power of the universe are not equipped in body, mind, will and spirit for the exercise of such awful power. . . . The churches, and church organizations, nationally and locally, have done much, and can do far more, to advance this effort."

Because of urgent service at the United Nations, Ambassador Warren Robinson Austin was not present to receive his citation, but it was accepted on his behalf by his minister, the Reverend Charles Stanley Jones, pastor of the First Congregational Church, Burlington, Vermont. Reverend Mr. Jones presented the Award at the regular church service on Sunday, June 27. Mr. Austin said in part, "The really important work of the United Nations in promoting peace is being done through the

new hope that is being instilled into the hearts of men everywhere by the activities of the General Assembly and its many related agencies. Progress toward peace must be achieved on a spiritual basis, and it is on that basis that the United Nations is making real progress in preventing war."

The third Award was presented to Mr. Jefferson B. Smith, representative of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, North Dakota, who replied:

"Mr. Moderator: My vocabulary is limited. When I was informed of this occasion, I was made to understand that on account of the limited time, I would not be required to speak. At the coming of the missionary to my ancestral lands, my tomahawk was placed under the soil and for that reason my friends fear no violence in misinforming me.

"I am a member of the Fort Berthold Indians residing in North Dakota.

"On about May 20, 1948, we were compelled to surrender 155,000 acres of our lands to the U.S. Government. The right to hold ancestral lands was a right which was solemnly promised by the U.S. in treaties and contracts. The promises have been broken. In the remote past, the Indian reigned supreme and was lord of all he possessed. Time has wrought many changes. The Indian has become inferior to the white man; he is forced to serve him and is subject to his master's orders.

"Belonging to a minority group whose skin is pigmented seems to be a disqualification which serves as a bar in preventing participation in the benefits of American justice. We are being punished for being Indians by a Christian nation.

"I am most happy to receive this Award. It is a great honor. To you, Mr. Moderator, and to the General Council, I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

The fourth citation was made for Dr. Charles Spurgeon Johnson, President of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee. In his reply, President Johnson spoke about the race rela-

tions work initiated by the American Missionary Association which he had directed. This was the most outstanding work in community self-survey, reporting of current events in a *Monthly Summary* and cooperation with other organizations in the field of race relations which has been undertaken by any church agency. Since becoming President of Fisk University, Mr. Johnson has turned over the responsibility of leadership to Mr. Herman N. Long, but he maintains his active interest as chairman of the committee in charge.

Beginning this fall the Reverend Galen R. Weaver, who has directed the Committee on Church and Race for the past biennium, will become a member of the Race Relations staff and the Council for Social Action will share, jointly with the American Missionary Association, the responsibility for his work. President Johnson viewed with favor this unification of all the race relations work of the Congregational Christian Churches and looked forward to the significant contribution it could make through the use of sociological knowledge for the improvement of race relations.

The full texts of the citations, as read by Mr. Swan, are found on the following pages. The service preceding the presentation used a Litany on the Lord's Prayer, prepared by the Reverend Frederick M. Meek, Pastor of Old South Church, Boston. The speaker of the evening was Professor Liston Pope, whose address on "A New Kind of Churchmanship" is printed in this issue of the magazine.

—RAY GIBBONS



KATHARINE FREDERICA LENROOT

Defender of the rights of children in democracy, deviser of standards for their protection in industry, we cite you for a Social Action Churchmanship Award, because in the Children's Bureau you have devoted your life to exceptional public service.

Graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1912, honored with its Doctorate of Laws in 1938, in which year you addressed our General Council in Beloit, and honored by Russell Sage College and Tulane University in 1948, you began your public service in the Industrial Commission of Wisconsin in 1913, when that state was pioneering in social legislation. Assistant Director of the Social Service Division of the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, 1915-21, you served as Assistant Chief of the Bureau, 1922-34, and since then as Chief. You were Executive Secretary to the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, 1940, President of the Eighth Pan-American Child Congress, 1942, Adviser to the U.S. delegates to the International Labor Organization Meeting in Paris, 1945, and to the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace in Mexico City, 1945.

All this you have done in the Spirit of Him who set a child in the midst, saying "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," and Who proposed to build His Kingdom about him. We trust that what you have given the children of America may through your wisdom and devotion become more widely the portion of the children of the world.

WARREN ROBINSON AUSTIN

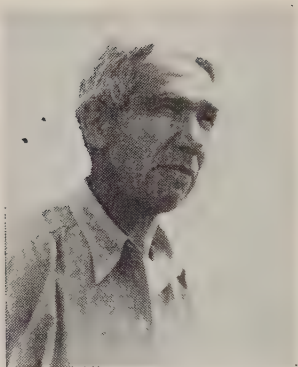


Lawyer, Statesman, Diplomat, distinguished citizen of the United States and of the World, we hail you for a Social Action Churchmanship Award, because with courage and persistence you have sought among men and nations to create a world of justice under law.

As a Lawyer you practiced in your Green Mountain State, in the Federal Courts of your District, in the United States Court for China, and in the Supreme Court of the United States, where you brought to successful termination the historic 150-year-old Boundary case between Vermont and New Hampshire.

As a Statesman you represented the United States at the Philippine Commonwealth Inauguration in 1935; investigated the Palestine Mandate in 1936; surveyed the Puerto Rico Judicial System in 1937. You were a valued member of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs during the war effort, and of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee that laid the groundwork for the Dumbarton Oaks Agreement. Your service in devising the Act of Chapultepec was a strong influence in bringing the nations of the Western Hemisphere solidly into the United Nations. Your leadership contributed to the success of the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1947.

As American representative on the Security Council of the United Nations, with ind discourageable patience and tolerance, you have negotiated with other nations to the highest achievable accord, in unwavering faith that the spiritual aspirations of men yet will triumph.



JEFFERSON B. SMITH

Counsellor and Defender of forgotten peoples, eminent citizen and Churchman, we cite you for a Social Action Churchmanship Award, because you have not stayed on the reservation and let your people perish, but have taken their case to Congressional Committees and presented their claims to Department Heads in Washington.

Member of the Tribal Council of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation on the banks of the Big Missouri in North Dakota, you have served as Chairman of the Board of Deacons of the Memorial Congregational Church at Elbowoods, the Reverend Harold W. Case, Pastor, and as a member of its Social Action Committee.

When Army Engineers proposed the multi-million dollar Garrison Dam that would flood more than half the Fort Berthold Reservation, which your people have occupied for generations, and that would force their removal to impossible badlands, you headed a delegation to Washington that secured a postponement of the plan, and counselled a more comprehensive development of the Missouri Valley.

With the same wisdom and passion with which another leader once cried, "Let my people go!" you have cried, "Let our people stay!" We applaud your courage and leadership, and that of the members of the Tribal Council. We welcome you into the fellowship of those who have done much for neglected peoples, and cite you for social action with humane imperative.

CHARLES SPURGEON JOHNSON



Sociologist and Educator, servant of the United States and of the United Nations, we cite you for a Social Action Churchmanship Award, because you are a prophet of the New Day Ascending in the culture of our times.

Graduated from Virginia Union University, with degrees from the University of Chicago, and honors from Howard and Columbia, you studied Negro Migration for Carnegie Foundation, investigated housing for the Chicago Urban League, served on the President's Conference on Home Ownership, and on the Commission on Farm Tenancy of the Tennessee Valley Authority. You directed the Department of Social Science at Fisk University, 1928-47, contributed to its annual Festival of Music and Fine Arts, and are now President of your noted institution. You served on the United States Educational Commission to Japan in 1946, with the United States delegation to UNESCO in Paris in 1946 and in Mexico City in 1947, and were delegate to the International Congregational Council's Committee Meeting in Bournemouth, England, in 1947.

As social scientist and author with a well-directed passion for humanity, as educator and churchman with discrimination in choosing the forces with which you work, you have competently contributed to our understanding of ourselves and others, and helped lay the foundations for an enduring society.

WASHINGTON REPORT



September 15, 1948

By Thomas B. Keehn

THE POLITICAL LOOKING GLASS

It was a trick done with a mirror. At least this seems to be as good an explanation as any of the "extraordinary" session of Congress which added to the heat of Washington's summer. The Democrats filibustered over civil rights. But this was really manipulated by the Republicans who wanted to stalemate effective action on the critical issues of inflation and housing. Thus the Democrats did the work for a Republican filibuster. Political advantages were cancelled out, Congressmen returned to their electioneering, and no one lost except ordinary citizens. See what we mean by a mirror?

Actually, the final exhibition of the 80th Congress took second billing to the main attraction of the summer season. This was the "spy hunt" conducted by the Un-American Activities

Committee. But more of that later. The interlude between the end of Congress and full-fledged campaigning which will begin in late September is a good time to stand back and survey the political scene in perspective. Thumbing through issues of *Washington Report* for the years 1944-48 is perhaps a good way to get a panoramic view of this period of history.

Looking Backward

Four years ago, World War II moved irresistibly toward its successful conclusion. Hopes of men were lifted by plans for a new international organization for peace and security. The UN was born. Congress approved the charter by an overwhelming majority. The United States government tackled the central problem of our day—

atomic energy. Peace-loving citizens cheered as civilian governmental control of domestic production and supplies of atomic energy won over military control. An international atomic development authority was talked about and planned for as the necessary next step. A program of full employment in peacetime was charted with the Council of Economic Advisers as the central intelligence service for economic problems. Congress surprised everyone by passing the Reorganization Act, the first major face-lifting job in the legislative branch since

1893. A school lunch program and the hospital construction act were approved in the social legislation field. This was the record of the 79th Congress. It was a time of transition—from war to peace, from sorrow to hope.

Then the post-war letdown settled upon the nation. It was both political and ethical. Three new political factors—peace, Truman, and the Republican Congress—formed a kind of unholy trinity. At least they conspired to work against each other in the difficult days of the 80th Congress.

A NEW LOOK

In 1944, the Council for Social Action launched a new publication — the *Washington Report*. Four years later, this new venture takes on a new look. It becomes an integral part of *Social Action*.

This consolidation is not just a superficial change in style. Rather it is designed to strengthen both publications by adding the currency of *Washington Report* coverage to the sound social and religious analysis which has always characterized *Social Action*. It is the high hope of the Council for Social Action that the combination will serve our readers better by

providing deeper understanding of contemporary problems and the religious insights necessary for intelligent action.

In a real sense, the new *Social Action* with *Washington Report* was inevitable. New occasions do teach new duties. The swift movement of modern history has confronted the nation and the church with new responsibilities. As an agency of the Christian church, the Council for Social Action must gird itself with the strongest possible weapons. We sincerely believe that this enlarged publication will be an effective instrument for the new kind of churchmanship which the day demands.

The arrival of peace was contradicted by increasing international tension which necessitated tremendous economic expenditures and military preparedness. Political dissension within the United States, symbolized by the Democratic Administration and the Republican Congress, was accentuated as the 1948 Presidential election drew near.

The most significant event of this era of hard feelings was enactment of the European Recovery Program. If it has time to work, this program of economic reconstruction may yet save the peace and the United Nations. Reflecting current political conflict, Congress compromised on inflation controls and housing, displaced persons and reciprocal trade agreements. It also took the more or less negative actions of abolishing war-time powers of the executive, economizing on government expenditures, curbing labor unions, and reducing taxes. There was much talk about social legislation and civil rights . . . but nothing more than talk. A significant study looking toward reorganization of the executive branch of the federal government was inaugurated.

The image which thus

emerges from the looking glass is a United States which is politically indecisive and conservative. As a nation, we tackled the problem of peace as if it were a war-time production problem. Do something big; do it quick. Then forget it and move on to something more enjoyable. Fortunately, a bi-partisan approach to foreign policy was preserved following the establishment of the UN. This made possible the reluctant approval of ERP. But in general the United States has not exhibited the patience and wisdom necessary to carry on the painstaking, complex and long-term job of building the peace. We have not yet accepted responsibility commensurate with our power. On the domestic front, economic conservatism and political tradition combined to produce a return to the good old ways. Laissez-faire in economics and free-for-all in politics became the order of the post-war day. Though surrounded by many serious domestic and international problems, the nation had to endure inaction in the last bitter session of the 80th Congress.

The Church's Dilemma

The church was confronted with a peculiar problem in this

period. The campaign in support of the United Nations carried on by the churches was perhaps the most effective piece of social action in a century. But the campaign did not finish the job of building the peace, though in many church circles support of the United Nations was equated with peace and peace with absolute Christian principles. Many church people were not prepared for the give and take, the progress and retreat, that are inherent in the long-term job of transforming old institutions and building new ones. Some churchmen, for example, became impatient with the United States government when it was forced to move on two planes in its conduct of foreign policy, both within and without the UN. They abhorred any unilateral use of American economic or military power, even though in the insecure and unbalanced post-war world, the absence of such power would increase the temptation for aggression and make the UN's task of maintaining peace and security an impossible one. Support of the UN is terribly important, but it can become too absolute, too simple a solution.

Having said all this, civilization is faced with a great urgency. In an atomic age, as

in every age, the birth of a new order of free men is painful. Because it is born in travail, it must be built securely if it is to endure. But it must be built soon, or all will perish.

Looking Forward

Political predictions are always dangerous and usually mistaken. Having examined the recent past, however, it is perhaps possible to sketch in outline the new political era which is dawning. The image which will appear in full only with the passage of time depends upon many intangibles — personalities, unpredictable events, and the inexplicable mysteries of party politics.

Major legislative issues will be fewer in number and more fundamental in content. Many good causes will still be pressed upon Congress and citizens for their favorable approval. But attention will be focused on an examination of American foreign policy and political philosophy.

Support of the United Nations and economic aid are two generally accepted pillars of U.S. foreign policy today. Questions still remain to be settled, however, which will determine the real direction of American foreign policy. What

is our long-term program of international economic relations? Will economic aid for relief and reconstruction be implemented by continuation of the reciprocal trade agreements program and approval of the International Trade Organization? Or will we return to a program of high tariff, quantitative restrictions and barter? On a still more fundamental level, will the necessary political and military steps be taken to make our pledges of economic assistance and freedom meaningful? Can we do this and still support the UN, preserve the independence of cooperating nations and refrain from American aggrandizement? Finally, will the U.S. support those limited, practical steps which can be taken to transform the UN into an international body with power to govern on a world-wide basis? The answers to these questions may well determine the possibilities for peace in our time.

And what about American political philosophy? Here issues which will affect every individual and organized group in the nation will be studied, discussed, and settled for many years to come. A clarification of the prerogatives of the legislative, executive and judicial

branches of the federal government is certain. Events of the past generation have raised the executive branch to a position of new eminence. Recently the legislature has challenged some of the functions of the executive and claimed others for itself. Here is a basic problem for American democracy. The separation-of-powers system of government must not only designate responsibilities but these several powers must achieve a high degree of cooperation. For intelligent, efficient government is indispensable in our complex, interdependent society.

A subsidiary but equally important problem is the relation between the federal government and the several states. Either

YOUR SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE!

The appearance of *Washington Report* as part of *Social Action* is a good occasion to experiment with new features. Suggestions from our readers would be particularly welcome at this time. Do you want more background material on a few major issues? Would information on the legislative and political process at work, with suggested techniques for action, be helpful? Do you like stories of political personalities? What about the work the church is doing—in legislative action and seminars? Constructive or critical, your comments will be welcome and appreciated.

state and local governments are obsolete, or they must become vital links in the democratic process. Again, economic and social facts of contemporary life dictate that delineation of function must be accompanied by cooperation.

Probably the United States will not face the problem of governmental responsibility for the economic system in a systematic manner until forced to do so by a crisis. But memories of the depression-haunted 1930's are still too fresh in the minds of millions of people to permit this question to be long evaded. The first crack in the economic system will revive demands for action by government. Economic knowledge has not achieved mathematical precision but enough is known to guide government in taking certain specific steps.

Finally, there is a political restlessness permeating all of America today. It expresses itself sometimes in the emergence of independent political groups, in third and fourth parties. Negatively, it is seen as either apathy or disaffection toward the major political parties. No one can predict the meaning of this except to know that it is fundamentally important and will leave its imprint.

The Church's Responsibility

A configuration of policies, parties and personalities is being formed which means that the U.S. is on the threshold of a new political era. The churches, in turn, are presented with new responsibilities for the political order.

The first task is to select a few key issues and seek to arouse fuller support for them by carrying on an effective program of education and action. It will be important to be realistic about these issues. Good intentions must not be confused with good legislation. Particular campaigns must not be equated with the Kingdom of God.

As a private institution, more free from state control than any other, the church must seek to maintain a delicate balance between the new order and the old freedom in our society. Government must be strong enough to be independent of any special group and to serve the general community. At the same time, church, school and economic organizations must be free enough to keep the springs of democratic action fresh.

The American church has a special task in regard to church-

state relations. Our history combines the concept of a religious society—a nation under God—with a church organically separate from the state. This relationship must be zealously preserved.

Believing that protection of the family is the first principle of social welfare, the churches have increasingly supported social security, public education, health services and housing programs on a community basis. In these fields, the welfare of the individual can be best safeguarded by planning for the welfare of all.

In a time of political change and international tension, the churches must accept a special concern for the protection of civil rights. This brings us back from pleasant political journeys into the past and the future—back to the ominous present, and a look at the House Un-American Activities Committee as it handled the problem of security and civil rights.

The Broken Mirror

The most disturbing picture in the closing days of the 80th Congress was the game of cops and robbers played by the Un-American Activities Committee. This band of little men, flushed with self-importance resulting

from too much publicity, had now uncovered a spy-ring! With a "listen in tomorrow" or a "to be continued," the story moved from one sensational charge to another. Generally the accusations were pyramided on very flimsy evidence. Authentic cases of subversive activities produced by the Committee were already well known to the F.B.I. and to a Federal grand jury. Now the Un-American Activities Committee added a maximum of klieg lights, movie cameras and gavel pounding, and a minimum of concern for basic civil rights and traditional American judicial processes.

What were the real motives behind this exhibition? Undoubtedly politics and the approaching election are part of the explanation. A spy scare is an excellent way to divert attention from the real issues of the day. Also, the Republicans and the Dixiecrats used the occasion to discredit the record and the leaders of the Democratic administration, particularly those with New Deal connections. Behind this was the long-standing feud between the Legislative and Executive branches of government.

Presumably some of the members of the Un-American

Activities Committee rationalize the bright glare of disclosure in public hearings as the only way to ferret out espionage agents, spy rings and loyalty risks which the F.B.I. and U.S. Courts know about but have not convicted. Whatever the motive, it is expensive, for many innocent men are smeared, their professional reputations and means of economic livelihood endangered. In a democracy, the fate of one man affects the welfare of all. Civil rights cannot be abrogated at any point without opening up a flood-gate which will inundate all rights. Surely, if it be granted that there are real security problems for our government in this insecure period of history, democracy can find a better way to act than this. Perhaps a special national commission, patterned after the Canadian Royal Commission which investigated and broke Communist espionage activities, should be appointed. Working carefully, quietly—and lifted above the level of partisan politics—such a Commission could at once protect the security of

the nation and the rights of individual citizens.

At any rate, this problem will be with us for some time. It is part of the post-war mentality and international tension. Legislative and Executive agencies compete for the honor of protecting America. A new loyalty bill, a Communist registration bill, and proposals to strengthen the espionage laws will undoubtedly be considered as important legislative issues in the 81st Congress when it convenes next January. Some carefully devised legislation may be needed. But if procedures such as those employed by the Un-American Activities Committee are used as the basis for legislative action, then the present loyalty program, which operates under Executive Order, and irresponsible charges in Committee hearings, may seem like child's play. Before starting down this dangerous road, Congress and thoughtful citizens should look in the record of our history and institutional practices and see their own freedom and security mirrored there.

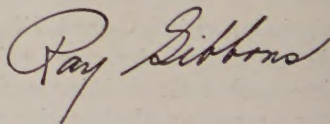
A Voting Record of the 80th Congress, prepared by the Legislative Committee of the Council for Social Action, is now available. Order copies from the C.S.A. office: 10¢ each; 5¢ each for 50 or more copies.

On To Action

One decade and four years ago, the social pioneers of our fellowship brought forth in this Oberlin Inn, a new agency, the Council for Social Action, conceived in Christian concern and dedicated to the proposition that all men are children of God, entitled to justice, freedom and security. We who are met in the hall where that vision was born, are met in another testing time of history, testing whether that agency, or any agency of the churches so conceived and so dedicated can and should survive.

But in a larger sense we cannot commemorate the creation of this agency by any word or act of our own. The record of that birth is written in the achievements of the past fourteen years—carefully wrought statements of foreign policy, creative approaches to labor-management relations, Mullenbach and Merom Institutes, local and state conference social action committees and pioneering legislative work in Washington, D.C. Above all, in the virility and unique achievement of SOCIAL ACTION magazine. We can neither add to nor detract from such a record. The giving of the churches, the efforts of many ministers and the concern of able laymen have hallowed this spot.

It is rather for us the living to here take increased devotion to the cause for which Arthur Holt, Graham Taylor and Stoddard Lane brought forth this Council, that this Council for Social Action, guided by Christian statesmen of vision and fortitude, designed for the children of God stricken by a sinful social order, may find a new birth of hope and life, that the kingdoms of this earth may become the Kingdom of Christ and that He may reign forever and forever.



—FROM THE REMARKS OF MR. GIBBONS AT THE
COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE, COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL
ACTION, OBERLIN INN, OBERLIN, OHIO, JUNE,
1948.